



Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Kilton Road  
Six Bedford Farms, Suite 607  
Bedford, New Hampshire 03110-6532  
603 644-0888  
FAX 603 644-2385

**Memorandum**

To: Homestead Dam Feasibility Study  
Advisory Group &  
Potential Consulting Parties

Date: August 5, 2005

Project No.: 51577.00

From: Peter J. Walker, CWS

Re: Progress Report

---

Our team is closing in on the final Feasibility Study, which we hope will be published by the end of the month. We received several compilations of written comments on the draft document, and heard many other questions and comments during our May and June public meetings. Attached to this memo are copies of the notes from these meetings, as well as the slide presentations.

**Public Comments**

About 60 people attended the June 8 Public Informational Meeting. Despite the rain pounding on the roof of the gymnasium, we managed to have a good exchange of information. In addition to the discussion at the meeting, we have received written comments from the following individuals and agencies:

- Deb Loiselle and Grace Levergood, NH Department of Environmental Services
- Jim Turek, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Bill Neidemeyer, US Fish and Wildlife Service
- John Magee, NH Fish and Game Department
- James McConaha, NH Division of Historical Resources
- Sara Carbonneau, Town of Swanzey
- Barbara Skuly, Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee
- Steve Stepenuck, Swanzey Conservation Commission
- Paul Daniello, Swanzey Resident

There is still some time to get your comments to NHDES (see below), and we'll make every effort to address your question or comment in the final report. Written Comments on the draft Feasibility Study can be submitted to:

Deborah Loiselle  
River Restoration Coordinator  
NH Dept. of Environmental Services  
29 Hazen Drive, PO Box 95  
Concord, NH 03302-0095  
dloiselle@des.state.nh.us

**Concrete Dam Option**

In addition to clarifying several items in the feasibility study, one specific item emerged from the public comments: *The study team should not have assumed that the dam replacement would be "in-kind"*

*i.e., with a similar timber crib structure. Better information on more conventional dam construction methods should be presented in the final feasibility study, which may reduce the overall dam replacement costs.*

In response, NHDES has asked the consulting team to complete analysis of another alternative that would use a concrete gravity dam construction type. This analysis should be completed in August, and presented in the final report.

### **Historical Resources**

The consulting team has met with the Division of Historical Resources three times since the May meeting. DHR remains concerned about the potential loss of the dam, which is regarded as a historical resource, and has requested more detailed information on the historic resource represented by the dam.

NHDES has agreed that a full copy of the draft Historic District Area Form would be made available to anyone who requests this extensive report. The area form contains information on the mill, dam, and the surrounding village. The final Feasibility Study will contain this entire document as an appendix. In addition, NHDES has directed the consulting team to complete a more intensive study of the dam itself, including comparison to other dams in the state, over the next few months. This additional study, however, is contingent upon funding which is not yet approved. In lieu of the detailed study, the final Feasibility Study will incorporate some additional information from NHDES Dam Bureau files to examine the potential significance of the Homestead Dam in particular.

### **Selectmen Deliberations**

The Swanzey Board of Selectmen will be holding a meeting on August 10<sup>th</sup> to begin discussions on whether to take ownership of the dam. The Selectmen are actively seeking public input during this discussion, and have requested comments from the Conservation Commission (which recommends the dam removal option in a letter dated July 14), the Planning Board, and other town boards.